

Contact your local health department if you have questions about TB or if anyone in your household has been exposed to TB.



For persons with disabilities this document is available on request in other formats. Please call 1-800-525-0127.

TB

Treatment for Latent Tuberculosis Infection



WHAT IS LATENT TB INFECTION?

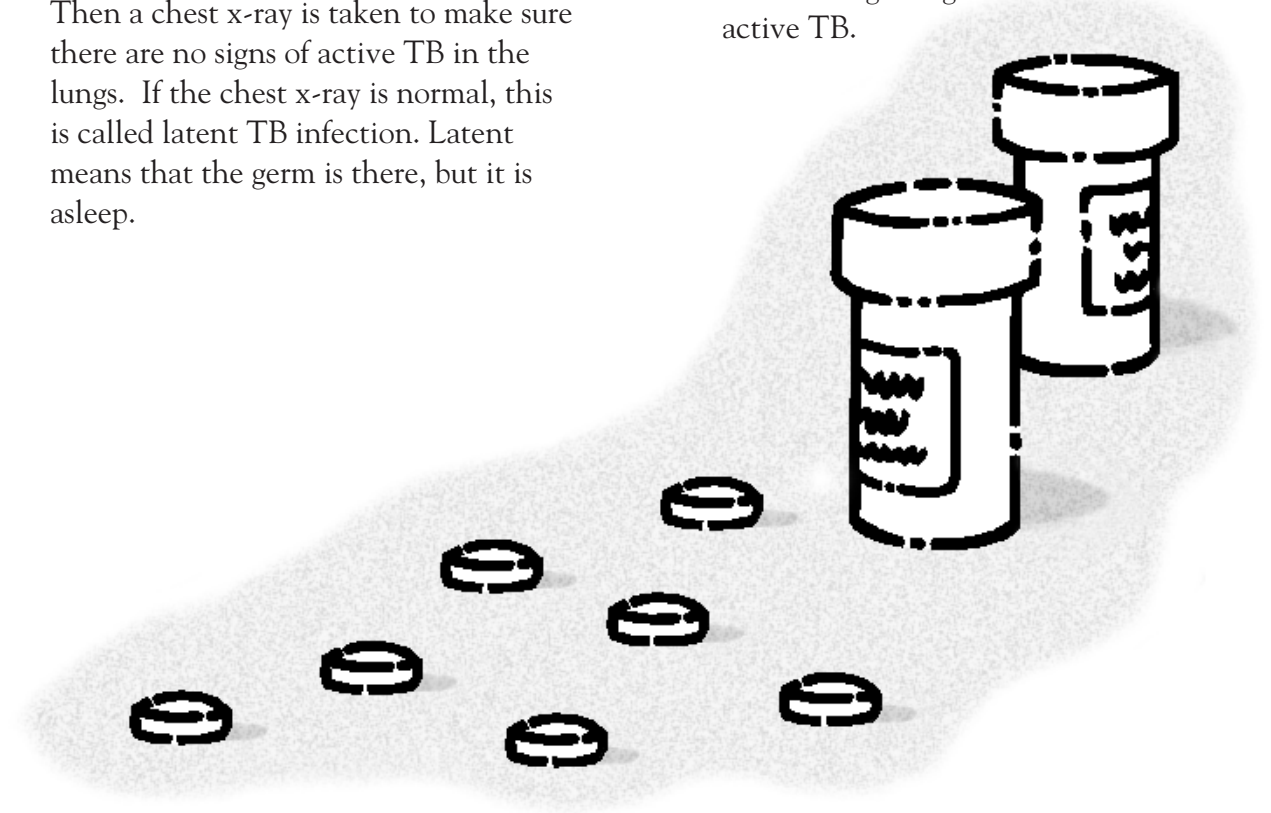
Latent TB infection occurs when you have the TB germ inside your body, but it is not causing any illness and it is not contagious.

In most cases, the way this is found is with a TB skin test. In two to three days, if the skin test area shows hardness, that usually means you have been infected with the TB germ at some time in the past.

Then a chest x-ray is taken to make sure there are no signs of active TB in the lungs. If the chest x-ray is normal, this is called latent TB infection. Latent means that the germ is there, but it is asleep.

If I am not sick, why do I need to take medication for latent TB infection?

If not treated, there is a chance that the latent TB infection will later break out and cause active TB disease, usually in the lungs. This can make you very sick and can spread to other people around you. It is hard to cure active TB and takes at least six months of more complicated treatment. Taking the pills now for the **full treatment period** reduces the chances of getting active TB.



TREATING LATENT TB INFECTION

How long does it take?

Depending on which medication your doctor or clinic nurse gives you, it can take from two to nine months to treat latent TB. It takes such a long time because the medication kills TB germs very slowly, so it has to be in you for a long time to make sure that the germs are all killed. It is very important to take the pills for the full period that your doctor or clinic nurse recommends, even though you don't feel sick. If you stop taking the pills before the end of the full treatment, the chances of cure are much lower.

What are the side effects?

These are very safe drugs, especially when patients talk to their doctors or clinic nurses about any side effects they feel while taking the pills. Some people get feelings of headache or stomach upset that come for a while after the pills are taken, especially during the first few weeks. These are not dangerous, they get better over time, and are not a reason to stop treatment unless they are severe. Let your doctor or clinic nurse know about side effects. They can give you advice about how to feel better while taking the pills.

More serious effects are rare, but should be reported immediately to your doctor or clinic nurse. These include:

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Liver pain
- Yellowing of the eyeballs
- Darkening of the urine (coffee or tea colored)
- Fever for more than three days
- Easy bruising or bleeding gums
- Skin rashes
- Joint pains.

If you have any these symptoms, call your doctor or clinic nurse before taking any more of the medication. In most cases, your doctor would need to examine you and do some blood tests to see if it is due to the TB pills.

*Mark a calendar
every day
when you take your pills*



MY CHILD HAS TO TAKE TB PILLS, TOO.

How will this affect my child?

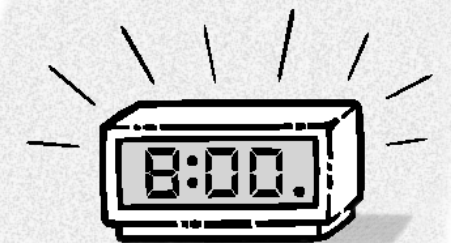
Even if he or she is not sick, your child must take TB pills to prevent sickness. These medications are even safer in children than they are in adults. Your child will be able to play with other children, go to school or daycare, and do other activities just like before.

Remember that children's doses are often smaller than for adults—be sure to keep your child's pills and your own separate. Contact your doctor or clinic nurse if you are having trouble getting your child to take the medicine or if you think the medications are causing a problem.

PAIN RELIEVERS

Do not use acetaminophen (Tylenol and other brands) for pain or fever while taking TB pills. This can be very harmful to your liver. Instead, use ibuprofen (Advil and other brands).

*Take your pills
every day
at the same
time of day*



WAYS TO REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR PILLS

- Take them every day at the same time of day.
- Mark a calendar every day when you take your pills.
- Before you go to bed, put pills out for the next day. Make sure they are out of reach of small children.



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